

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1. A locking cover for closing a manhole formed in a soffit, said locking cover comprising:

5                   an upper section having a size and shape for extending across a soffit manhole and including a first peripheral rim for engaging an upper soffit surface circumscribing the manhole;

10                  a lower section having a size and shape for closing the soffit manhole and including a second peripheral rim for engaging a lower soffit surface circumscribing the manhole; and

                      a lock unit for lockably interconnecting said upper and lower sections with a peripheral margin of the manhole formed by said soffit being sandwiched between said first and second peripheral rims.

15                  2. The locking cover of claim 1 wherein said upper and lower sections each have a generally circular shape.

20                  3. The locking cover of claim 1 wherein said upper section comprises at least two segments each having and size and shape for passage through the manhole, and said upper section further including means for assembling said at least two segments to form said upper section and to cooperatively define said first peripheral rim.

25                  4. The locking cover of claim 3 wherein said at least two segments comprises a pair of part-circle segments cooperatively defining when assembled said upper section having a generally circular shape.

30                  5. The locking cover of claim 4 wherein one of said pair of part-circle segments has an arcuate span greater than 180°, and the other of said pair of part-circle segments has an arcuate span less than 180°.

6. The locking cover of claim 1 further including a lock post carried by said upper section, and a post port formed in said lower section for slide-through passage of said lock post, said lock unit including means for releasably engaging said lock post for lockably retaining said lower section in assembled relation with said upper section.

7. The locking cover of claim 6 further including at least one shim element interposed between said lock unit and said lower section for positioning said lower section with said second peripheral rim substantially seated against said lower soffit surface, when said lock unit is engaged with said lock post.

8. The locking cover of claim 6 wherein said lock unit comprises a lock cartridge having a core pin movable between an advanced locked position and a retracted unlocked position, said lock post having a lock port formed therein for slide-fit reception of said core pin in said locked position.

9. The locking cover of claim 6 further including means for supporting said lower section from said upper section when said lock unit is disengaged from said lock post.

10. The locking cover of claim 9 wherein said supporting means comprises a bolt.

11. The locking cover of claim 10 further including a nut carried in a captured position by said upper section for receiving said bolt passed upwardly through said lower section.

12. The locking cover of claim 6 further including a containment sleeve carried by said lower section in a position surrounding said lock post when said upper and lower sections are lockably interconnected, said lock unit comprising a lock cartridge having a size and shape for slide-fit reception

upwardly within said containment sleeve for locking engagement with said lock post.

5               13. The locking cover of claim 12 wherein said lock cartridge has an upwardly open port formed therein for slidably receiving a lower end of said lock post, and a laterally reciprocal core pin movable between an advanced position lockingly engaged with said lock post and a retracted position disengaged from said lock post.

10              14. The locking cover of claim 13 wherein said core pin has a laterally open key slot exposed through said containment sleeve for key-actuated movement of said core pin from said advanced to said retracted positions.

15              15. The locking cover of claim 14 wherein said containment sleeve has a vertically elongated slot formed therein for laterally exposing said key slot.

20              16. The locking cover of claim 15 wherein said vertically elongated slot formed in said containment sleeve is closed at a lower end thereof.

25              17. The locking cover of claim 6 wherein said lock post has an enlarged shoulder for at least partial reception into said post port formed in said lower section.

30              18. The locking cover of claim 13 further including a secondary barrier wall extending downwardly from said lower section in relatively close spaced relation with said containment sleeve at one side thereof to restrict access to said core pin.

19. A locking cover for closing a manhole formed in a soffit, said locking cover comprising:

5           an upper section including at least two segments having each having a size and shape for separate passage upwardly through a soffit manhole and adapted for assembly at a location above the manhole to form said upper section having a size and shape for extending across the manhole and including a first peripheral rim for engaging an upper soffit surface circumscribing the manhole;

10           a lower section having a size and shape for extending across and closing the soffit manhole and including a second peripheral rim for engaging a lower soffit surface circumscribing the manhole; and

15           a lock unit for lockably interconnecting said upper and lower sections with a peripheral margin of the manhole formed by said soffit being sandwiched between said first and second peripheral rims.

20           20. The locking cover of claim 19 further including a lock post carried by said upper section and extending downwardly therefrom, a post port formed in said lower section for slide-through passage of said lock post, and a containment sleeve carried by said lower section and extending downwardly therefrom in surrounding relation to said lock post, said lock unit comprising a lock cartridge within said containment sleeve and including means for releasibly engaging said lock post for lockably retaining said lower section in assembled relation with said upper section.

25           21. The locking cover of claim 20 further including at least one shim element interposed between said lock unit and said lower section for positioning said lower section with said second peripheral rim substantially seated against said lower soffit surface, when said lock unit is engaged with said lock post.

22. The locking cover of claim 20 further including means for supporting said lower section from said upper section when said lock unit is disengaged from said lock post.

5           23. The locking cover of claim 22 wherein said supporting means comprises a bolt.

10          24. The locking cover of claim 23 further including a nut carried in a captured position by said upper section for receiving said bolt passed upwardly through said lower section.

25. The locking cover of claim 20 wherein said lock cartridge is slidably carried within said containment sleeve.

15          26. The locking cover of claim 20 wherein said lock cartridge has an upwardly open port formed therein for receiving a lower end of said lock post, and a laterally reciprocal core pin movable between an advanced position lockingly engaged with said lock post and a retracted position disengaged from said lock post.

20          27. The locking cover of claim 26 wherein said core pin has a laterally open key slot exposed through said containment sleeve for key-actuated movement of said core pin from said advanced to said retracted positions.

25          28. The locking cover of claim 27 wherein said containment sleeve has a vertically elongated slot formed therein for laterally exposing said key slot.

30          29. The locking cover of claim 28 wherein said vertically elongated slot formed in said containment sleeve is closed at a lower end thereof.

30. The locking cover of claim 20 wherein said lock post has an enlarged shoulder for at least partial reception into said post port formed in said lower section.

5           31. The locking cover of claim 27 further including a secondary barrier wall extending downwardly from said lower section in relatively close spaced relation with said containment sleeve at one side thereof to restrict access to said core pin.

10           32. A locking cover for closing a manhole formed in a soffit, said locking cover comprising:

15           an upper section including at least two segments having each having a size and shape for separate passage upwardly through a soffit manhole and adapted for assembly at a location above the manhole to form said upper section having a size and shape for extending across the manhole and including a first peripheral rim for engaging an upper soffit surface circumscribing the manhole, and a lock post carried by said upper section and extending downwardly therefrom;

20           a lower section having a size and shape for extending across and closing the soffit manhole and including a second peripheral rim for engaging a lower soffit surface circumscribing the manhole, said lower section further including a post port formed therein said lower section for slide-through passage of said lock post, and a containment sleeve carried by said lower section and extending downwardly therefrom in surrounding relation to said lock post; and

25           a lock unit for lockably interconnecting said upper and lower sections with a peripheral margin of the manhole formed by said soffit being sandwiched between said first and second peripheral rims, said lock unit comprising a lock cartridge within said containment sleeve and including means for releasibly engaging said lock post for lockably retaining said lower section in assembled relation with said upper section.

33. The locking cover of claim 32 further including at least one shim element interposed between said lock unit and said lower section for positioning said lower section with said second peripheral rim substantially seated against said lower soffit surface, when said lock unit is engaged with  
5 said lock post.

34. The locking cover of claim 32 further including means for supporting said lower section from said upper section when said lock unit is disengaged from said lock post.  
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35. The locking cover of claim 32 wherein said lock cartridge is slidably carried within said containment sleeve.  
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36. The locking cover of claim 32 wherein said lock cartridge has an upwardly open port formed therein for receiving a lower end of said lock post, and a laterally reciprocal core pin movable between an advanced position lockingly engaged with said lock post and a retracted position disengaged from said lock post.  
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37. The locking cover of claim 36 wherein said core pin has a laterally open key slot exposed through said containment sleeve for key-actuated movement of said core pin from said advanced to said retracted positions.  
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38. The locking cover of claim 37 wherein said containment sleeve has a vertically elongated slot formed therein for laterally exposing said key slot, said vertically elongated slot formed in said containment sleeve being closed at a lower end thereof.  
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39. The locking cover of claim 37 further including a secondary barrier wall extending downwardly from said lower section in relatively close

spaced relation with said containment sleeve at one side thereof to restrict access to said core pin.

40. A method of installing a locking cover for closing a manhole formed in an overhead soffit, said method comprising the steps of:

forming an upper section from a plurality of segments each having a size and shape for individual passage upwardly through manhole, and wherein said segments are adapted for assembly to form the upper section having a first rim for engaging an upper soffit surface circumscribing the manhole;

passing the upper sections segments in unassembled form upwardly through the manhole;

assembling the upper section segments at a location above the manhole to form an assembled upper section;

positioning the assembled upper section to extend across the manhole with said first rim engaging at least a portion of the upper soffit surface circumscribing the manhole;

forming a lower section having a size and shape for extending across and covering the manhole, and including a second rim for engaging a lower soffit surface circumscribing the manhole;

positioning the lower section to close the manhole with said second rim engaging the lower soffit surface circumscribing the manhole; and

releasably locking the lower section to the upper section.

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